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VOLUME 169

Burkina Faso

Samuel Decalo

Compiler



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This series, which is principally designed for the English speaker, will eventually cover every country (and many of the world's principal regions), each in a separate volume comprising annotated entries on works dealing with its history, geography, economy and politics; and with its people, their culture, customs, religion and social organization. Attention will also be paid to current living conditions – housing, education, newspapers, clothing, etc. – that are all too often ignored in standard bibliographies; and to those particular aspects relevant to individual countries. Each volume seeks to achieve, by use of careful selectivity and critical assessment of the literature, an expression of the country and an appreciation of its nature and national aspirations, to guide the reader towards an understanding of its importance. The keynote of the series is to provide, in a uniform format, an interpretation of each country that will express its culture, its place in the world, and the qualities and background that make it unique. The views expressed in individual volumes, however, are not necessarily those of the publisher.

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Introduction

Burkina Faso, the successor of Upper Volta, encompasses a territory of 105,870 square miles (274,200 km) and a population of around ten million people. This landlocked country at the centre of West Africa shares borders with six other states: Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo and Benin in the south, Mali in the north, and Niger in the east.

The country is a vast monotonous plateau, drained to the south by the Volta River system. The average height of the plateau is 400 metres above sea level (1,300 feet) with its highest point Mount Nakourou near Mali (749 metres or 2,472 feet). The country receives only 635-1,145 mm of rainfall and has been periodically ravaged by severe droughts. The northern half of the country is relatively arid even in the best of years, although it sustains high population densities, being the centre of the ancient Mossi kingdoms. The country's high population growth and density on poor and progressively degraded soils has given rise to an outward migration of labour to neighbouring Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire (estimated at upwards of 500,000 people a year), which has been the subject of considerable academic research.

The population of Burkina Faso comprises a number of ethnic groups (often divided into the Mossi and Mande peoples), the most numerous of whom are the Mossi (estimated at three million) and the Gourma in the north and east respectively, and the Bobo (350,000) in the southwest. Other sizeable groups include the Fulani (350,000), the Hausa, the nomadic Tuareg with their Bella domestic serfs (250,000) in the northwest, and the Lobi (120,000) in the south.

The vast majority of the population is engaged in subsistence cultivation, mostly living in 7,224 villages, each with an average population of 600. The country's demographic spread is only slowly changing, despite the fact that the capital, Ouagadougou, has doubled its population in just over ten years to 330,000 people, becoming a large urban slum. The country's other urban centres are

Reference Works, Bibliographies and Research Sources

waterworks and electricity plants. Some of the information is dated, but not easily obtainable elsewhere. The material is organized for readers conversant with English, French, German, Dutch, Spanish, Italian and Serbo-Croat.

- 412 **Sociétés et fournisseurs d'Afrique Noire.** (Societies and suppliers of Black Africa.)

Paris: Ediafric. 1964- . annual.

This trade directory of French Africa has been defunct since the late 1980s. Arranged alphabetically by country, the 'Haute-Volta' or 'Burkina Faso' section comprises around seventeen pages, providing capsule information on all private or mixed companies in the country, their address, telephone and fax numbers, capitalization, name of managing director, and equity share of the owners. In a separate section are listed all major European companies involved in trade with French Africa, with equivalent data about them.

Atlas de la Haute-Volta. (Atlas of Upper Volta.)

See item no. 1.

Burkina Faso.

See item no. 2.

Burkina Faso.

See item no. 3.

Indexes

There follow three separate indexes: authors (including editors, compilers, contributors, translators and illustrators); titles of publications; and subjects. Title entries are italicized and refer either to the main titles or to other works cited in the annotations. The introductory definite or indefinite article is omitted from titles in English. The numbers refer to bibliographical entries, rather than page numbers. Individual index entries are arranged in alphabetical sequence.

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Map of Burkina Faso

This map shows the more important towns and other features.

